

DD/S&T 266-72

26 January 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: U.S. Position in Scientific and Technical
Information Systems

STATINTL

1. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the U.S. position is deteriorating in organizations which influence the development of international systems for handling scientific and technical information.

2. From an intelligence point of view, this area may have been of little concern in the past because of the general superiority of U.S. science and technology. However, as the technological competence of a growing number of nations has increased the relative U.S. position has eroded, and therefore it may be worthwhile to reconsider the potential value of participation in, or influencing, scientific and technical information systems.

3. In addition to the information itself, some S&T access and influence among developing nations may be realized.

4. The deteriorating position of the United States in the three key scientific and technical information system organizations may be due in part to a lack of focus in the United States with respect to representation. The National Science Foundation and the National Academy of Science as well as the Office of Science and Technology have been involved from time to time.

5. [REDACTED] the three key international groups are:

International Federation for Documentation (FID),
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural
Organization (UNESCO), and
United Nations Industrial Development Organization
(UNIDO).

The retiring Secretary General of FID is a Soviet, and the technical information head in UNIDO is also a Soviet.

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6. An important activity in FID is the control and updating of the Universal Decimal Classification system (UDC) which is increasingly used for handling science information.

7. UNIDO, with headquarters in Vienna, provides aid to developing nations in organizing scientific and technical information systems. This Fall, for example, India requested Soviet assistance in this area. Training programs have been conducted for Near East and African nations under Soviet leadership. These training sessions are often held in Moscow.

8. One of the UNESCO suborganizations, UNISIST, is now moving toward the development of international standards for an information system, and key decisions may soon be made which will impact importantly on our ability to efficiently and effectively handle scientific and technical information. As in the case of the other organizations, the U.S. does have some representation. I believe [redacted] that Scott Adams is currently the chief U.S. representative. He is from the Research Council of the Academy of Sciences. Other U.S. representatives in this area have included Bill Knox and his predecessor, Ames. Burton Adkinson of NSF was at one time the President of FID.

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Special Assistant to the
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